DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 228 RE 001 539

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Instructional Improvement Program in Language and Reading for Selected Subculture Groups in the Southwest.

Pub Date [68]
Note-22p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.20
Descriptors-Bilingualism, *Curriculum, Dialects, Educationally Disadvantaged, *Language Development, *Language Instruction, *Language Programs, Second Language Learning, Teacher Education

An instructional improvement program in language and reading designed for children deficient in three language areas is described. These children, verbally destitute due to a restricted environment and lack of models and stimulation, users of nonstandard English, possessors of underdeveloped language due to unconceptualized experiences, or bilingual and deficient in both languages, are found to have limited success using abstract symbolism which is foreign to them in terms of experiences and language. The program's plan of development, objectives, teacher education, philosophy, elements, and curriculum design are explained in detail. Emphasis is placed on developing communication skills in a standard English dialect, with simultaneous training in the students' native language. Content stresses universal values. (JB)

ED026228

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SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY
RATIONALE

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN LANGUAGE AND READING FOR SELECTED SUBCULTURE GROUPS IN THE SOUTHWEST LANGUAGE - BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Dr. Elizabeth Ott, Program Director

The Problem and Implicit Needs

In the Louisiana-Texas region, the three major linguistic groups which historically experience the greatest rate of failure in school are the Spanish-speaking Mexican American, the French-speaking Louisiana Acadian, and the Negro and white American who speak only a non-standard English dialect. The important problem facing this child is to succeed in the academic setting using abstract symbolism which is foreign in terms of experience and language. In the Southwest, school programs composed primarily of work with abstract symbols have multiplied the problems of all children, but have been particularly detrimential to these ethnic-cultural groups, where children at six years of age are expected to begin at the abstract level of linguistic decoding (understanding and reading) a language which is relatively unknown in its symbols and the referents for which they stand.

Language deficits of children from these linguistic groups (excepting the physical and mentally handicapped) may be broadly classified into three types: (1) The child who is verbally destitute and possesses very little language of any kind due mainly to a highly restricted and circumscribed environment and lack of appropriate models and stimulation. (2) The child who uses a form of language not acceptable in school, and which is often characterized by gross errors

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and oddities. (3) The child whose language is underdeveloped due to unconceptualized experiences, i.e., whose perceptions have been fragmented and therefore, whatever conceptions he may possess are frequently false and inaccurate, or inappropriate in context.

For the "bilingual" child, several kinds of underdevelopment may exist to a greater or lesser degree in his use of the native language; while at the same time he may be handicapped in English in any one or more of these same areas of deprivation. For example, a child may be verbally destitute in English, and at the same time be verbally restricted and use non-standard forms in his native language. Certainly, for the child who must receive academic instruction in a second language the problems are compounded.

Program Planning

The planning of a Language and Reading Program to attack these problems began October 1966. Surveys were made regarding the extent of the language problem and the resultant educational deprivation in various geographic locales populated by the ethno-cultures of concern. All available information was studied by the Program Committee and decisions regarding program were based on this collection of data. The following five hypotheses were formulated for the development of the program:

1. Primacy of Oral Language Development. If children from minority groups are introduced to standard English through meanings derived from concrete experiences accompanied by precise language for concept development, audio-lingual

methodology will prove valuable in accelerating the learning of this language.

2. Bilingual Systems. For the child of a non-English language background, systematic instruction in his native language will enhance his self-image, enable him to experience greater success in conceptualizing and learning, increase his capacity and desire to learn a second language, and finally, help him to become literate in two languages.

3. Meaningful Content. If content of the language program is drawn directly from meanings and basic structure of the content fields, the dichotomy which presently exists in "traditional" reading materials between sterile fiction confined to highly restricted vocabulary and the task of reading and understanding conceptually loaded expository material will not exist.

4. Language Skills. If the skills of linguistic decoding (listening and reading) and encoding (speaking and writing) are learned through such expository material, emphasis on syntactical and phonic approaches will prove highly effective in terms of conservation of teacher-pupil time and effort and evidenced by pupil achievement gain.

5. Cultural Understanding. If a child is given an understanding and appreciation of himself and his own culture, the cultural differences of others are accepted and given perspective. Through a structured program providing in-

tellectual engagement with important ideas, the child learns that it is on the higher planes of mental activity that men may come to know true equality.

Objectives

The goal of this program is two-fold:

A. To develop, field test and refine a curriculum in Language and Reading for the elementary grades which will equip children of the target populations with communication skills in a standard English dialect through which they will be able to participate successfully in the academic setting. For those of French or Spanish language background, skills will be developed in the native language as well, thereby providing a sound bilingual education.

B. To make the program available through demonstration and dissemination to schools serving populations which have similar characteristics and needs. The use of technology to facilitate and accelerate learning will be explored as the materials are more fully developed. It is expected that this program, through its refinements, will over time bring about significant gains in educational achievement for children now suffering the most in terms of linguistic deficits.

Model for Program Development and Teacher Education

Instructional materials are designed to provide:

1. Content based on universal values, so that goals, habits, customs, language and other aspects of culture are seen as commonalities of all people and are understood in their historical, anthropological, and geographical dimensions.
2. Organization of content to insure systematic development, refinement, and reinforcement of concepts, broad cognitive patterns, and linguistic skills, interlocked by plan and sequence to feed directly into the structure of the disciplines.
3. Opportunities for each pupil to demonstrate and apply his learning in a variety of situations and to use this learning to acquire and relate new knowledge.
4. Through success-oriented models, nourishment of the self-image into a strong personal identity as a worthy individual and a contributing member of society.
5. Specific training for further achievement and independent study by helping the pupil to:
   - organize and classify experiences
   - perceive selectively for a given task
   - understand abstract relationships
   - generalize and apply
   - verbalize and communicate clearly, using acceptable forms of the language

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

MODEL

for

Program Development
and
Teacher Education

Language-Bilingual Education

PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

CURRICULUM
DESIGN

P H I L O S O P H Y

1. Environment Preparation
2. Inherent Motivation
3. Individual Respect
4. Success Orientation
5. Program Specialization
6. Quality Control

Component 1 Phase 1

Program Development Teacher Education

Language-Bilingual Education

PHILOSOPHY

Program Elements

Curriculum Design

I. Basic Premises

The following are the fundamental beliefs and basic assumptions for the development of the San Antonio Language Research Project, including its program, methodology, administrative organization, and operational procedures.

1. The environment for learning. Within the physical setting, equipped with adequate and appropriate furnishings and specialized instructional aids, the environment for learning is created. This varies from day to day and from classroom to classroom according to the competence, developmental level and emotional strength of teachers and pupils, the degree and quality of planning, and the efficiency of organization. The feeling of warm affection and sincere acceptance between teacher and pupils, and the realization by pupils, parents, and teachers, of the fundamental significance of the learning that can be achieved in the school are also major influences on a favorable classroom climate. The teacher's task calls for robust vitality, academic competence, patience, realistic appraisal of pupil socio-psyco-economic backgrounds, and the sincere concern and interest needed to nurture the best effort possible in order to kindle the spark of learning. The environment must be prepared thoroughly so as to encourage mutually constructive attitudes, zealous scholarship, and sound learning. In order for such an environment for learning

to become a reality, the professional climate of the school system, its administrative pratices and controls, its administrative practices and controls, and its policies of recognition and rewards are basic considerations.

2. The desire to learn. The thirst to know and a desire to learn is a basic and innate quality of humanity. Throughout the period of early growth and development, children intuitively seek appropriate means for expression of thoughts and feelings to satisfy an intense urge to move forward beyond their present status. Through continual opportunities for thinking, feeling, and experiencing, a child's capacity to develop is influenced to the fullest. Readiness and receptivity to new learning occur. The child's unique expression is encouraged, accepted, and subtly refined and channeled. Freedom to be one's self is productive to healthy growth, as is also responsibility. The feeling of having contributed proves satisfying and stimulating to the child. A desire for self-improvement serves as a leavening agent. Accompanying such opportunities for self-fulfillment through involvement is a focusing on goals which are important to the child. Willingness to accept responsibility follows naturally as the child assumes the obligations which he has contracted. The ensuing satisfaction in successful planning and doing brings courage and wisdom into the life of the child.

3. Respect for the individual. Respect for the unique per-

sonality of each pupil is brought about by acceptance and support for his efforts. In both verbal and non-verbal communication the teacher conveys an attitude of concern for each individual and a belief in his worthiness. Teacher-pupil planning sets the stage within which the learner becomes actively engaged in determining goals, deadlines, activities, and in making independent choices.

4. Conditioning for success. Teacher expressions of appreciation for pupil efforts exert favorable influences. Faced with a constant supply of appropriate models, the child always has before him an example of what is expected of him. Children need to know how it feels to be successful. To a child learning to handle a "new" language, realization that a sentence has been spoken well, even though he may have been given a number of models, provides opportunity to recognize achievement. Innate capacities develop to the fullest in an environment filled with opportunities to "fail safe." The feel of success is a source of courage to adventure.

5. A specialized program. Specialized instructional programs including both methods and materials are developed to meet the specific needs and learning styles of the student population. Different approaches are employed, e.g., (1) structured, highly developed preplanned instructional materials (AAAS: Science, A Process Approach,

adapted for instruction in English as a Second Language); and native Spanish and (2) relatively unstructured instructional materials (the Social Studies model) in which the planned concepts are developed in class with the particular pupils concerned, providing opportunity for creative use of language skills learned through intensive, planned instruction and making use of that which is real and purposeful in the lives of these children. Instruction generally proceeds from the concrete to the abstract and usually from inductive to deductive in cognitive development.

6. Quality Control from continuous modification. Through regular and frequent evaluations--both formal and informal--of the methods, materials, implementation, and the learning environment, implications for further improvement are indicated. Continuous modifications of components of the system are made as these are indicated for greater gains in pupils growth and achievement.

P R O G R A M E L E M E N T S

1. Psychology
2. Sociology and Culture
3. Learning Theories
4. Substantive Content
5. Methodology
6. Linguistics

Component 2

Program Development

Language-Bilingual Education

Phase 2

Teacher Education

Philosophy

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Curriculum Design

Objectives of the Program

This program is designed to provide:

1. Program content based on universal values, so that goals, habits, customs, language and other aspects of culture are seen as commonalities of all people and are understood in both historical, anthropological, and geographical dimensions.

2. Program organization to insure systematic development, refinement, and reinforcement of concepts, broad cognitive patterns, and linguistic skills all interlocked in a planned program which has depth and feeds directly into the content structure necessary for academic success.

3. A learning environment in which each pupil is given opportunities to demonstrate and apply his learning in a variety of situations and to use this learning to acquire and relate new knowledge and skills.

4. Through daily experiences and success-oriented models, nourishment of the emerging self-image into a strong personal identity having worth as an individual and as a contributing member of the larger society.

5. Specific training for further achievement through helping the child to:

   a. Organize and classify his experiences

   b. Perceive selectively (or tune out irrelevant noises and distractions) for the task at hand

Point 1: Psychology of learning

1. Initial massed reinforcement
2. Spaced interval reinforcement
3. Transfer of learning - generalization leading to insight
4. Simple to complex
5. Concrete to abstract
6. Constant use of 2 or more pathways e.g., auditory-oral, auditory-visual, auditory-visual-oral, visual-auditory-oral tactile
7. Physical, emotional, and intellectual maturity levels as growth patterns emerge
8. Variety of presentations affording numerous, different contests for perceiving, classifying, and conceptualizing

Point 2: Sociology and Culture

Arthur Rubel has said, "No other cultural trait matches Spanish as a symbol of the integrity of the Mexican American of the Southwest." Needless to say, however, colloquial Spanish in this region is now permeated by English vocabulary and English constructions, so much so that this peculiar dialect has been recognized by separate names: Tex-Mex in Texas, Pocho in Arizona and elsewhere in the Southwest.

The influence of English on the Spanish of the Southwest contributes to the very fast developing sense of distinctiveness which the Spanish-speaking person of the Southwest feels when he visits Mexico or is visited in turn by Mexican nationals.

On the one hand the retention of Spanish connotes for this group an identity separate from that of the Anglo segment of the population in the Southwest, whereas on the other hand the influence of English on the Spanish of the Southwest lessens the sense of identification which the Spanish-speaking people of the Southwest hold to Mexico, wellspring of the traditional way of life of the people of the American Southwest.

This bilingual education program preserves, utilizes, and expands the pupil's knowledge of his native tongue, while it also provides him sound and intensive instruction in English. In this way, the full dimensions of both cultures and both languages enrich his life and promote human understanding.

Point 3: <u>Learning theories - development of concepts</u>

1. Labelling and percept formation - association of

phenomena and language

2. Partial concepts and relationships
   - Incomplete generalizations e.g., a limited number of applications of a concept to specific instances
   - Those number of properties associated with a concept as yet incomplete or not fully habituated
3. Full generalization and differentiation appropriate to the child's maturity level: e.g., he can <u>define</u> the concept in his own terms, prove its properties by inspection and distinction of common and distinctive properties, enable accurate, consistent applications to specific instances, make spontaneous use of concepts in classifying new phenomena

Point 4: <u>Substantive Content</u>

Through hearing the behavior of the scholar in the field, the pupils develop an understanding of the discipline, and its contributions to human knowledge e.g., in science, the investigation of problems includes:

- observation and drawing inferences
- classification

- perception of relationships
- generalization
- communication

Point 5: Methodology

- Variety of direct experiences accompanied by appropriate language
- Description of direct experiences using oral language at all levels of concept development
- Structuring new learning experiences to provide use of previous experiences for generalization

Point 6: Linguistics

1. Syntactical

   Development of basic sentence structure in English and the native language

2. Lexical

   Terminology of the field of study developed through direct experiences

3. Morphological

   Usage of inflections and derivational forms in the languages

4. Phonological

   Patterns of sounds stress and intonation, with special help provided where interferences between the languages occur

C U R R I C U L U M D E S I G N

1. Content Analysis
2. Topic Sequence
3. Cognitive Skills
4. Symbol System
5. Learning Experiences
6. Teaching Procedures

Component 3

Program Development

Language-Bilingual Education

Phase 3

Teacher Education

Philosophy

Program Elements

CURRICULUM DESIGN

Curriculum Design

The following six-step outline is used in reorganization of curricular content for the bilingual child and is the general procedure for the development of bilinguistic materials used in our Laboratory's Language Program: 6-step procedure for reorganization of curriculum.

A. In the first step, the content is analyzed for each of the disciplines to be taught through the medium of Standard French or Standard Spanish dialect and English as a second language, to determine the special basic abilities it requires, considering:

(1) its value to education, e.g., Science -

helps us to understand the composition and interaction of the universe

Language -

to communicate

(2) the inherent structure of the subject matter area, e.g., Mathematical -

operations involve spatial, temporal, and quantitative relationships

(3) the various symbol systems, such as the vocabulary of the physical, biological, and

social sciences, for example, numerals, signs, and formulas of mathemetical processes

(4) various relevant methods of instruction for this content, e.g., observing, relating, inferring, organizing, classifying

(5) the types of problems it solves, e.g., Social Sciences- perception of patterns in human behavior and understanding cause effect relationships

(6) the kinds of inquiry which it fosters, e.g., surveys, research, experimentation, hypothesizing, discriminating between fact and opinion, evaluating

B. In the second step, the major topics to be learned are selected and a sequence determined for presenting them. This is done by surveying topics in the Content Guide, and supplementary reinforcement and enrichment materials. Decisions are then made in accordance with the developmental level of the learners. This includes the physical, emotional, experiential, achievement levels, as well as any other characteristics particular to the group.

For example, the topical sequence in our study begins with the process of observation: identifying shapes, components of shapes, color, size, and texture. The next major topics deal

further with the development of sensory perception: sounds, odors, flavors; then on to space-time relationships.

C. Next, there is set up a hierarchy of the thinking processes to be developed within each topic. These are objectives which are formulated from understandings and abilities around which specific lessons are then designed. Such a hierarchy begins with the most basic and concrete types of thinking, developing up into the more complex and abstract and leading to the formation of concepts.

D. The fourth step in curriculum design is the identification of the specific terminology and symbolism inherent in the material to be learned. The vocabulary, then, is couched in structure models which are chosen on the basis of frequency and usefulness to the learner. These are as simple and explicit as possible in both languages and are representative of linguistic expressions which are typical and acceptable to the educated group in both the Spanish-speaking and the English-speaking communities.

Linguistic considerations are:

1. Syntactical. Development of basic sentence structures
2. Morphological. Development of the lexicon of inflections and derivational forms
3. Phonological. Development of patterns of sounds, stress, and

intonation in Spanish and English, with particular emphasis on sound combinations occurring in one language and lacking in the other

4. Functional. Development of basic patterns which the children will need in order:

   a. to handle basic communication in Spanish and English

   b. to describe and learn about their environment in both languages

   c. to achieve at least a fair chance for success in beginning reading instruction in both languages

E. All early learning experiences are accompanied by concrete representations illustrating the meaning of the concepts being developed cognitively and expressed linguistically. By actively experiencing through the senses; this means observing, handling, rearranging, matching, smelling, tasting, feeling, the meanings of the language and the relationships being expressed are firmly established and reinforced.

F. Finally, in the sixth step, the development of step-by-step procedures for teaching language patterns is established. The methodology includes audio-lingual techniques, providing a variety of language reinforcement drills.

These procedures for language teaching are written in detail in the sequence to be followed by the teacher. A procedural chart illustrates these. Where linguistic problems are anticipated, provisions are made by suggesting remedial drills, games, exercises, and activities. For example, the first and simplest drill is:

1. Modeling-Repetition Technique
2. Substitution Drills

Transformational Grammar Techniques:

3. Statement to Question
4. Positive to Negative
5. Negative Statement to Negative Question

Application and Reinforcement Procedures:

6. Directed Dialogues - Role Playing

The program differs from current practices in the following ways:

1. Speech is the cornerstone of instruction in the language arts, and therefore, oral communication precedes and remains well in advance of other skills.
2. By establishing oral mastery of the operations (elements, laws, usage) of the language, the pupil is provided a system wherefrom he can construct an infinite number of syntactical entities for use in communication.
3. The content for learning the Code System is expository rather than literary. By utilizing general patterns of curriculum exposition, from science, mathematics, and the social studies, syntactic equations serve to manipulate ideas and concepts. Vocabulary growth is generated from

syntactic context.

4. The instructional task is placed primarily on the teacher rather than a specified text to be slavishly followed. The teacher must 1) be highly skilled and knowledgeable in the methodology of second language teaching, 2) possess excellent command of the language taught, 3) be sensitive to the individual needs of pupils and make necessary adaptations in materials and instruction, and 4) know the current literature, both pedagogical and instructional.*

* Where the instructional program is given in two different languages, the above requirements apply to both languages being taught.

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ERIC REPORT RESUME

ERIC ACC. NO.			
CH ACC. NO.	P.A.	PUBL. DATE	ISSUE
RE 001 539		[68]	

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ERIC REPRODUCTION RELEASE? YES ☐ NO ☒
LEVEL OF AVAILABILITY I ☒ II ☐ III ☐

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TITLE
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SOURCE CODE	INSTITUTION (SOURCE)

SP. AG. CODE	SPONSORING AGENCY

EDRS PRICE	CONTRACT NO.	GRANT NO.
0.25;1.20		

REPORT NO.	BUREAU NO.

AVAILABILITY

JOURNAL CITATION

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
22p.

DESCRIPTORS
*LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION; *LANGUAGE PROGRAMS; *LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT; *CURRICULUM; SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING; BILINGUALISM; DIALECTS; EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED; TEACHER EDUCATION

IDENTIFIERS

ABSTRACT
An instructional improvement program in language and reading designed for children deficient in three language areas is described. These children, verbally destitute due to a restricted environment and lack of models and stimulation, users of nonstandard English, possessors of underdeveloped language due to unconceptualized experiences, or bilingual and deficient in both languages, are found to have limited success using abstract symbolism which is foreign to them in terms of experiences and language. The program's plan of development, objectives, teacher education, philosophy, elements, and curriculum design are explained in detail. Emphasis is placed on developing communication skills in a standard English dialect, with simultaneous training in the students' native language. Content stresses universal values. (JB)